

## Discussion on Transit Revenue Scenario

### Vision

#### **Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) vision for Oregon is:**

*As an integral part of the greater state transportation system, public transportation resources provide users with seamless access, mobility, and connectivity. Citizens and visitors benefit economically through access to services, employment, and recreation which in turn promotes healthy thriving communities.*

### Problem Statement.

**Public Transportation funding in Oregon is problematic.** Insufficient and cobbled together resources mean that Oregon's public transportation systems don't perform as a strategic network to meet today's and future mobility and congestion challenges.

- Planning for deliberate and strategic transit development is impossible when it's "boom or bust" from one budget cycle to another.
- Several small urban areas are not able to pull the federal dollars that are available to them because they lack local match. (Medford, Josephine County, Albany, Milton-Freewater)
- Funding sources are fragmented, bits and pieces wherever they can be found. (Business Energy Tax Credit (going away), Cig tax (going down), ID Card fees (up and down), General Fund (uncertain), FHWA funds (competitive), FTA (flat lined and at risk), local revenues very limited. Recent local funding efforts have failed.)

### Key Ingredients for successful transit network.

**Access, Availability, Connectivity and Economic Development.** These ingredients are crucial to mobility and transit success. These ingredients are used to create criteria that define the policies and investments made by ODOT.

**Access.** Means several things, including the ability:

- To travel to employment opportunities, community services, education, healthcare, etc.
- To get to the nearest transit stop.
- To use transit, if you are disabled or old.

**Availability.** Means

- the spatial availability "close to me",
- time availability "when I need it" and
- how far one may travel, i.e., the service area.

**Connectivity.** Means

## September 2015 Governor's Transportation Vision Panel Discussion

---

- integration of service: routes, schedules, fare structures, information systems and modal transfer facilities.

**Economic Development.** Means the public transportation contribution to economic development (for example)

- by providing an appropriate connection of workers to employers,
- may influence land-use choices, and land values
- contributes to ensure safe, healthy communities
- transit itself is a large employer
- Reduces congestion to provide capacity for high value freight.

### Oregon's Transit System Summary and Challenges:

Oregon's public transportation system is a business providing hundreds of jobs and expending over \$500 million annually in Oregon on operations. This connected system is composed of the following:

- Large and small system providers deliver over 141,000,000 annual trips across the state.
- TriMet, in the urbanized Portland metropolitan area, offers a full menu of services and provides about 82% of Oregon's trips.
  - Challenges for the Portland metropolitan area are many; ranging from union negotiation, high demand for paratransit services, new high frequency commuter services in challenging physical environment.
  - Cost of paratransit reduces the ability to expand fixed route services.

Other urban centers and rural areas make up the remainder of trips.

- Lane Transit and Salem Area Transit are considered large transit systems with a full range of bus and paratransit services. LTD also has Bus Rapid Transit which emulates a fixed guideway system rail but the superbuses run partially on the road.
  - Challenges are similar to the metropolitan area but resources are more constrained.
  - Services are also provided in lower population densities and therefore cost more.
  - Salem struggles with adequate local funding and cannot meet the demands for the weekend and night services of its growing area.
  - Congestion is a growing challenge. Additional service and frequencies to address commute times is expensive and takes from other parts of the system.
- Small urban area (Corvallis, Albany, Grants Pass, Milton-Freewater, Medford Area, Bend Area) providers offer fixed route and paratransit services and connect to other regional centers.
  - Assessment of the potential benefit of additional transit service for many communities in Oregon is unclear as providers simply are not able to offer enough service to estimate a true demand.
  - Trends indicate that transit is growing in popularity with youth and seniors.

## September 2015 Governor's Transportation Vision Panel Discussion

---

- Small urbans have similar issues to larger urban services with more costly longer distance services and much less public support available.
- Administration and planning activities, while mandated, are difficult to finance.
- Rural communities (Under 50,000 population), frequently offer a combination of scheduled and demand response services. They may use volunteer labor and have limited service hours and destinations.
  - In addition to funding issues, rural systems have difficulty finding resources for making longer distance connections.
  - Rural systems require technical help and planning support.
  - Rural systems can't meet frequency demands for job transportation and often must prioritize services to only medical and essential needs.
- Special Transportation Services for seniors and people with disabilities. Oregon's state funded program (STF) creates mobility for seniors and people with disabilities.
  - STF provides the opportunity to leverage federal funds by providing match to similar federal programs.
  - STF funding helps to offset the costs of unfunded mandates of ADA requirements for fixed route providers and allows them to focus their local general funds on best serving all populations efficiently.
  - Agencies with fixed routes must provide services for people with disabilities as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. This service requirement is very expensive. For example the cost of a fully allocated bus trip is about \$10 and a cost of paratransit trip is about \$50, and requires a separate fleet.
  - Oregon has a Key Performance Measure for Special Transportation trips with a goal to provide average of 29 annual trips for each older adult and person with disability by 2020.
- A fleet of more than 2,000 publically owned transit vehicles serve Oregon. (Approximately 800 serve the Portland Metro area, 400 in other urban systems and 800 around the state in rural communities)
  - Over half of Oregon's 2000 public transit vehicles will need replacement over the next five years to bring the fleet to within FTA's required replacement standard.
  - FTA requires that 80% of vehicles are within age and mileage standards appropriate for the sizes of vehicles.
  - Technology and travel information tools, passenger shelters and other facilities, assist to support the business needs of a connected transit network.

## ***What level of investment in transit is needed to meet basic mobility needs for all Oregonians?***

The 2012 "Oregon Non-Roadway Transportation Funding Options; Report to the Governor" estimated an annual gap of **\$363.9 M** additional funds to meet demand for public transportation service growth in Oregon. The PTAC recognized that this need is beyond today's resources. They worked with ODOT staff to recommend the following achievable maximizing strategies to sustain and increase the opportunities to benefit from Oregon's public transportation systems.

**Establish Dependable State Funding:** Public transportation investments provide the best return when state resources can be counted on and are indexed to growth. The majority of state funds are used to leverage federal funds. Transit is about providing efficient mobility for individuals using very deliberately planned service routes and schedules. Careful planning for use of transit equipment and labor is key to cost effective transit success. Sporadic, narrowly focused, or undependable resources make it difficult for communities and transit providers to make the best use of the transit investment.

### **Special Transportation (\$59.5 M)**

- **Maintain current status.** Stabilize current Special Transportation Program E & D general funds - \$13.5 M annual
- **Meet need.** Add \$5 M annual (26%) in additional funds to progress toward the legislatively approved key performance measure target of 29 rides per senior by 2020.
- **Improve** large urban systems by providing support for ADA Paratransit services for the three large urban systems. \$41 M. This will allow large urban systems to increase service options; adding back reduced routes and expanding in underserved areas.

### **General Public Transportation (\$22 M)**

- **Meet need.** Match \$22 M FTA federal program dollars with state funds that help local entities bridge the funding to draw available federal resources that build general public systems. This approach will create incentive for providers to reduce wait times and expand to evening and weekend services with local resources. It would allow the state and local entities flexibility to bring other federal resources to the table. This includes:
  - Address vehicle replacement. \$12 M to catch up for small urban and rural.
  - Increase rural transit opportunities. \$4 M state funds to match federal funds and build service hours. This will help address low income and student transportation needs.
  - Increase rural intercity service. \$2 M state funds to match additional rural connection operations. This will allow expansion of the POINT network of rural intercity contracted services.

## September 2015 Governor's Transportation Vision Panel Discussion

---

- Match FTA operations costs for the six small urban systems. \$4 M state match for small urban areas. This will allow small urban systems to draw all available federal funds into Oregon service.

**Customer Service/Information (\$500K):** Oregon is underinvested in technology and facilities to keep up with evolving expectations. People can access travel information in new ways. This offers an opportunity for increasing access to public transportation that didn't exist before. Information about ticketing, timing, scheduling, linking services, parking and bicycle facilities all help make better use of the entire transportation system

- **\$500K/year;** annual to modernize information and conduct research projects.

**Small Urban and Rural Facilities (\$4.5 M):** Several small urban and rural systems have need of buildings.

- Albany, Corvallis, Josephine County, and South Clackamas District all need administrative and maintenance facilities within the next five years.
- Other small systems need to start plans for these essentials.
- ODOT is also exploring the merits of a connected intermodal hub program that could improve transfer centers, amenities, and information connections.
- **\$4 M/year;** for small urban and rural facility improvements.
- **\$500k/year;** for match to develop intermodal service hubs for transit, rail, park and ride, bicycle facilities.

**Transportation Options (\$1M):** Transportation Options programs help Oregonians make smart healthy travel choices, and promote efficient use of the existing transit and highway transportation infrastructure.

- **\$1 M/year;** dedicated funding in support of regional Transportation Options programs to support efficient use of our highway and transit networks.

**Total Annual Recommended Maximizing Investment = \$87.5 to bring small urban and rural vehicle replacement current and develop targeted transit system improvements (within 5 years);** ((\$18.5 M STF, \$22 M Small Urban and Rural Fleet Capital and Operating, \$41 M Urban Paratransit, \$500k for Information, \$4 M for Facilities (not including large urban facilities), \$500k Intermodal Hubs, \$1 M TO programs))

# September 2015 Governor's Transportation Vision Panel Discussion

---

***What level of investment is needed to meet broader state goals (e.g., congestion, greenhouse gases, and economic development)?***

## **Systems Approach.**

One way to support Oregon goals is to create a “systems” approach to the Willamette Valley travel-shed, recognizing the growing urbanization of the region. Because of the growing population and density, and the dependencies between communities, availability of transportation options to meet individual needs is important.

Similarly, increased service levels in the rural areas of the Willamette Valley and the southern I-5 corridor between Eugene to Medford and the Bend and Redmond area is needed, also due to growth in population. Because connectivity to the regional system is important, investment in facilities and regionally connected rural services would contribute to the overall system.

- 70% of Oregon's population resides in the Willamette Valley.
- The valley is the Oregon hub of economic development with the majority of jobs and industry.
- I-5 is a major freight corridor.
- According the Urban Mobility Index, travel time delays in Eugene, Salem and Portland are getting longer due to increased traffic volumes and congestion at peak time.
- Single occupancy cars contribute to congestion and greenhouse gasses.
- Commute patterns contribute to the congestion and greenhouse gas:
  - Census data indicate that Multnomah, Marion, Polk and Washington Counties have the highest in-and out-bound commute rates in Oregon.
  - Clackamas Co has the highest rate of workers traveling outside the county to work; about 4% of Marion county residents commute to Washington and Clackamas County.
  - Similarly, there is a large exchange of commuters between Albany, Corvallis, Eugene and Salem.
  - Bend-Redmond and Grants Pass-Medford have similar commute and congestion patterns.

## **What do we have to work with?**

- In the Willamette Valley there are five regional metropolitan planning organizations, 13 public transit agencies, one commuter rail, Amtrak, the Cascades regional rail, and numerous intercity bus services, along with numerous counties and cities. Contributing to these services are transportation options programs (TO) that provide information about a variety of options to meet personal needs, including transit, bike, pedestrian, car and van pooling. The bike/ped system is growing and more people are using active transportation modes.
- In Oregon, ODOT is the closest thing to the responsible party for the Portland – Salem and Eugene corridor.

## September 2015 Governor's Transportation Vision Panel Discussion

---

○

Examples: Looking at investments in other areas in the country can be informative.

- Boulder – Denver corridor there are almost [100 round trips](#) each weekday in the 30-mile corridor provided by the regional transit agency. The populations of Boulder and Denver are roughly similar to those of Portland and Salem.
  - Looking at all transit service in the Portland – Salem corridor, there are about 30 round trips a day offered across the diverse transit providers in the corridor.
  - Boulder – Denver has the advantage of a single public transit agency with taxing authority, and with responsibility for the entire corridor.
- Wasatch Front – Ogden-Salt Lake-Provo, approximately 80 mile corridor is served by commuter rail and bus rapid transit, and is fed by local transit services available within the many smaller communities served.
- Everett to Tacoma, a 65 mile segment is also served by a variety of modes, including light rail, high frequency buses, and has regional connections to air, passenger rail, and local transit.

### **Scaled approach:**

The method to implement this vision would be a series of investments, both large and small. The goal is to create a systems approach to mobility within the Willamette Valley travel-shed and other increasingly congested areas of the state. Included in this approach would be:

- A series of park and rides along the I-5 and 99 E/W corridors that would support car and vanpooling;
- Increase public information and target marketing for transportation alternatives to the single occupancy car;
- Establish single-payment fare systems that allow for travel across regional transit service;
- Increase the frequency commuter services, including rail and high capacity bus systems, for example:
  - Commuter service along the I-5 corridor between Eugene and Portland would have a minimum level of hourly service and would operate at average speeds of about 55 miles per hour.
  - In the Portland urbanized area, frequent commuter service would be provided between McMinnville, Tigard and Milwaukie (where it connects with light rail); between Salem, Wilsonville and Beaverton; and between Canby and Portland, and Canby to Woodburn, connecting to Salem.
  - There would be connections between communities on 99W/E between McMinnville to Eugene, and between Junction City to Albany.
  - There would be frequent service between Corvallis and Albany, and connecting to Lebanon and Sweet Home.
  - Frequent services would be available in the Rogue Valley area and connecting to Grants Pass, and in the Central Oregon area.
  - Improved hubs would allow connections to local transit and would include bike and pedestrian facilities, for first and last mile access.
  - Local, rural services would make meaningful connections to rail and intercity bus.

## September 2015 Governor's Transportation Vision Panel Discussion

---

**Estimated Costs for initial investment – total ~\$75 million, of which \$17 million is an annual estimate of need:**

- \$3 million per year for hourly service on northern I-5 corridor
- \$5 million per year for north Willamette Valley, southern and central Oregon urban areas frequent services
- \$3 million per year for rural service improvements
- \$4 million per year for improved technology for technology equipment, travel information and regional fares
- \$5 million per year for rural facilities to improve connectivity
- \$15 to 50 million for three park and rides in the northern I-5 corridor
- \$5 million for 50 hub improvements \$10,000 to \$200,000 each for the Willamette Valley, southern and central Oregon, including potential bike share