

DATE: April 28, 2022**TIME:** 10:30 a.m. – Noon**MEETING LINK:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87842592110>

Join via phone (audio only): 253-215-8782; Webinar ID: 827 6080 1441

Meeting Purpose

- Share anticipated revenue for FY2024 and FY2025
- Solicit input on needs and opportunities

| TIME | SUBJECT | LEAD PRESENTER | QUESTIONS/OBJECTIVES |
|-------|---|---|---|
| 10:30 | Welcome and Introductions | Chair Harrington | |
| 10:35 | Agenda review | Chris Deffebach | Any questions on agenda |
| 10:40 | Review revenue forecast | Dyami Valentine, Washington County | Share anticipated revenue for FY2024 and FY2025 |
| 11:00 | Solicit input on needs and opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TriMet Forward Together • Updated equity mapping • On-board rider survey results • Review 2020 Transit Development Plan next tier opportunities | Michael Ray, TriMet Dyami Valentine, Washington County & John Whitman, Ride Connection | How can we make transit most useful to the public? What are you hearing from the community on needs and opportunities? |
| 11:45 | Public Comment | Chair Harrington | |
| 11:55 | Process, schedule and next steps | Chris Deffebach | Update on TriMet's HB 2017 and TC schedule |
| 12:00 | Adjourn | | |



WASHINGTON COUNTY OREGON

**WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT COMMITTEE #1
MEETING SUMMARY
MARCH 29, 2022, 2:00-3:30 PM
Zoom Virtual Meeting**

Members

Kathryn Harrington, Washington County, Chair
Jolynn Becker, City of Banks
Annadiana Johnson, Rider Representative
Stephanie Jones, City of Banks
Teri Lenahan, City of North Plains

Grant O'Connell, TriMet
Deanna Palm, Washington County Chamber
Mahesh Udata, Rider Representative
Elaine Wells, Rider Representative
Julie Wilcke Pilmer, Ride Connection

Attendees

Chris Deffebach, Washington County
Valerie Egon, Oregon Department of Transportation
Jessica Engelmann, City of Beaverton
Reza Farhoodi, Washington County
Mike McCarthy, City of Tualatin
Daniel Nava, Washington County
Sushmita Poddar, HB2017 Committee Member
Michael Ray, TriMet

Roy Rogers, Washington County
Jean Senechal-Biggs, City of Beaverton
Brenda Siragusa, Washington County
Julie Sosnovske, Washington County
Dyami Valentine, Washington County
Mariana Valenzuela, Centro Cultural
John Whitman, Ride Connection

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Kathryn Harrington opened the meeting welcoming members.

Purpose, Bylaws and STIF Refresher

Chris Deffebach presented the goals of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund and reminded members of the charge of the Washington County Transit Committee.

Participants questions or comments:

- Julie Wilcke Pilmer briefly discussed the STF process, which includes funding from a specific allocation from the TriMet HB2017 Committee, in addition to the combination of STF and STIF funds. The Special Transportation Fund Advisory Committee (STFAC) consists of community members and agency staff and receives applications from social service agencies and other nonprofits and will recommend funding for STF projects to the broader HB2017 Committee for inclusion in the PTIP. The STF process is operating on a similar timeline as the Transit Committee.

Washington County Service Updates, Project Accomplishments and Challenges

Julie Wilcke Pilmer provided an overview of service accomplishments since 2020, noting that while RC has made progress, there have been significant challenges that the service provider is trying to leverage into new opportunities, and noted that partners from the County and cities had been instrumental in identifying service needs and making sure that they're being met.

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John Whitman from Ride Connection discussed recent and proposed changes to Ride Connection community connector services:

- WestLink added new stops in Forest Grove and North Plains, as well as new midday service, increasing daily runs from two to four
- GroveLink added Saturday service and extended service to Cornelius on Saturdays
- North Hillsboro Link received additional service, including five additional hours on weekdays and new weekend service
- Tualatin Shuttle would soon see two additional hours each weekday, as well as a grant-funded extension to Bridgeport Transit Center and Borland Road (Green Line) and a proposed route modification expand service area (Red Line)

Ride Connection's weekday demand response service was expanded to improve flexibility. The service boundary was expanded east to SW 185th Avenue for door-to-door service to improve TriMet connections, and new connections were added between locations in the rural area. In addition, Ride Connection loosened the parameters for scheduling trips to require less advanced notice and has added two new electric vehicles to its fleet.

John mentioned that a planned rural workforce shuttle to provide transportation to farm, nursery and other agricultural workers had run into challenges launching the service due to difficulties hiring drivers and support staff. Ride Connection would be revisiting this program with hopes of launching later in the year. The provider is also continuing to coordinate with interregional providers to reduce service fragmentation and improve connections between providers, including with Tillamook County who received a STIF discretionary grant to add a third roundtrip in the midday for their Portland-Tillamook service.

Dyami Valentine from Washington County discussed the community connector stop enhancement project which received a STIF discretionary grant to improve stops at up to 22 locations across the shuttle network. Improvements may include new signage, landing pads, benches, shelters and other upgrades. This work includes design, procurement and installation, which will require coordination with the cities.

John Whitman presented on another STIF discretionary grant-funded project implementing software and equipment upgrades to improve on-time performance and operational efficiency with real-time data for route optimization and schedule adjustments.

Participant questions or comments:

- Chair asked if additional funding is available to implement the rural workforce shuttle. John responded that there is sufficient funding available for the pilot but that labor shortages remain a greater obstacle.
- One attendee asked how Centro Cultural could facilitate transportation trips for rural farm workers and whether non-English speaking people would be able to access the service. John responded that Ride Connection values Centro as a partner and recognizes that in-person outreach is critical to make these services more inclusive. He noted that Ride Connection has a mobility specialist on staff at Centro to provide outreach and support to constituents who may have limited English proficiency, and Ride Connection continues to broaden outreach to make these services more inclusive. Ride Connection also publishes materials in Spanish and has language specific support available for non-English speakers who call in.

Approach to updating the TDP

Washington County is conducting a shuttle service study to identify and evaluate near and longer-term community connector shuttle priorities. The study will establish prioritization criteria, identify service options for priority areas, develop investment priorities, and seek increased regional coordination funding through STIF.

John Whitman recapped Ride Connection's recent outreach and engagement efforts, which gathered public input on service planning priorities through meetings with employers, testimony at city council meetings and direct feedback on service proposals. Ride Connection conducted on-board rider surveys and used bus wraps and other informational materials to promote service awareness. He highlighted planned service changes in Tualatin that were designed in partnership with City staff and the Tualatin Area Aging Task Force.

Julie Wilcke Pilmer commended staff for being creative in marketing Ride Connection's services and planned changes during a time when in-person outreach was difficult or impossible. She then discussed impacts to service from COVID, which had caused a 50 percent decline in ridership across the four community connector services, in addition to the shortage of drivers. Julie stated that the primary objective was keeping drivers and customers as safe as possible through sanitation protocols, mask mandates, installation of plastic barriers on buses, and following state and federal guidance on social distancing and quarantining protocols after exposure. Drivers were provided PPE and hazard pay which became permanent salary raises. She added that no drivers had been exposed while on the job and no customers reported exposure while using Ride Connection's services.

Participant questions or comments:

- Chair asked if County staff would conduct outreach with retail businesses in new growth areas to determine transit needs for their employees. Dyami responded that capacity is limited for that level of outreach during this phase, but that once an area is prioritized for additional investment, Ride Connection would take the lead on engagement in service planning and how to best serve those communities.
- One member asked if Ride Connection was conducting surveys with employers (such as those along North Hillsboro Link) about plans for future work schedules to estimate future transit demand and commented that ongoing high gas prices may contribute to higher ridership. Julie responded that travel patterns have changed beyond just for commuting, and that Ride Connection would be conducting analysis on when and to what extent ridership would return on its system, as well as the purposes of those trips, and that employers and community members will remain involved in planning future service changes. She added that she hoped to get involved in TriMet's outreach efforts on how to increase or repurpose service hours to cater to newly developing travel patterns.
- Chair asked if there were driver training opportunities available with Worksystems Inc. to help reduce staff shortages and whether a Commercial Driver's License permit was required to become a driver for Ride Connection. Julie responded that Ride Connection would value any assistance and that shortages have not been unique to the system or to the region. Ride Connection has been revamping its benefits, including providing increased flexibility for drivers, and promoting them more widely to try to attract new hires. While extensive training is required, a Commercial Driver's License is not necessary for driving the 14-passenger vans.
- One member asked if drivers receive training for how to accommodate mobility device users and whether they could volunteer to assist in the training. Julie asked there is training and that they welcomed volunteers, either in-person or virtually.

Process, Schedule and Next Steps

Chris Deffebach described next steps for the committee. The next meeting in April will include reviewing needs and opportunities, evaluation criteria for shuttle priorities, and reviewing the STIF revenue forecast. In May, the committee would review and provide input on investment priorities and recommend priorities for public comment, and in July, the committee would review public comments and endorse priorities for the FY24-25 biennium and the TDP update. Chris also showed a schedule for the broader STIF approval process for the tri-county region, with the plan to submit the county's priorities for inclusion in TriMet's PTIP in August, and for the TriMet Board to approve the PTIP for submittal to the OTC in August. She emphasized that given limited resources, the County will need to take a longer-term view and be strategic in applying for discretionary grants to help fund new priorities once they're identified by the committee.

The Chair asked if committee members had any suggestions for public outreach that staff should consider prior to the busy summer season, such as partnering with the County Disability Aging and Veteran Services which periodically administers surveys to constituents. She added that surveys should be framed in a way to elicit more valuable feedback (for example, respondents should be asked "How do you want Ride Connection to expand service in your community?" rather than simply "What do you think about this plan?").

Participant questions or comments:

- One member suggested going to various farmers' markets across the county to provide multiple opportunities for the public to participate, especially for those without easy access to the internet or smartphones. Other suggestions included publishing in newsletters for senior centers and Meals on Wheels.
- One member recommended partnering with the cities to publish links to surveys on their social media accounts to spread the word, and that smaller communities may publish newsletters that can help advertise public outreach opportunities, as North Plains has done in the past.
- One member suggested reaching out to member employers within the various chambers of commerce across the county.
- One attendee suggested using libraries for public outreach and that there may be opportunities for tabling at various events, such as Centro's Children's Day on April 30.

Public Comment

- There was no public comment at the meeting.

Adjournment

Chair Harrington thanked committee members for their time and participation in this process. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.