

Linn County  
Transportation Advisory Committee  
January 31, 2019  
Lebanon Senior Center  
80 Tangent Street  
Lebanon, Oregon  
MINUTES

Members Present: Tim McQueary; Ken Bronson; Ted Frazier; Cris Kostol; Sandra Wess; Kindra Oliver; and Cindi Robeck

Staff Present: Mark Volmert

Visitors: Brittany Donnell, Sunshine Industries; Barry Hoffman, Albany Transit/Linn-Benton Loop; Dana Nichols, Albany Area MPO; Judie Foster-Lupkin, Chamberlin House; Alisha Tarr, Chamberlin House; Hank Berg, Seniors Citizens of Sweet Home, Inc.; and Mark Bernard, ODOT Rail and Public Transit Division

Call to Order

Tim McQueary called the meeting of the Linn County Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) to order at 1:30 p.m. Members of the committee and members of the audience introduced themselves.

Public Comment Opportunity (not related to Section 5310 funding requests or allocations)

No comments from the public.

Discussion regarding the 2019-2021 STF application and review process, including Oregon Government Standards and Practices provisions

Mark Volmert described the process which is approximately the same process that has been used for several biennia. He briefly reviewed the notification process regarding the availability of Section 5310 funds and the application process. He noted the Linn County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan continues to serve as the guide for the investment of transportation resources; in addition to local plans.

Consistent with the TAC's partnership efforts and in consideration of ODOT and federal requirements, Dana Nichols a staff member of the Albany Area MPO joined

the TAC members for the review of Section 5310 funding requests and the subsequent recommendations to the Board of Commissioners.

Volmert reviewed the Oregon Government Standards and Practices provisions. There were no disclosures of conflicts of interest.

Volmert provided background information about federal Section 5310 program in Oregon. (1) The Oregon Transportation Commission transfers \$25 million each biennium from federal highway funds to the Section 5310 transit program. These funds are allocated, on a population basis, to counties/transit districts for their allocation to local transit programs. (2) The Federal Transit Administration allocates Section 5310 to states and urban programs based on population. Prior to 2013 the FTA funds were allocated to ODOT which then allocated the funds to counties/transit districts based on population. MAP-21, the 2012 federal transportation act, changed the allocation to provide 60% to large urban areas, 20% to small urban areas and 20% to rural areas. Jurisdictions in Oregon receive a total of about \$8 million from these FTA funds. About \$5 million is allocated directly to the three large urban areas in Oregon; \$1.5 million to seven small urban areas; and \$1.5 million to small city/rural areas.

The small urban area funds are deducted from the county allocation formula and then redistributed on a statewide basis. Although the small urban areas funds must be spent for transit within the small urban area, ODOT decided that the allocation decisions for small urban funds would remain with counties (similar to the other Section 5310 fund decisions) rather than the MPOs.

ODOT will develop a statewide competitive grant program with the FTA funds for small cities/rural areas.

The 2019-2021 allocation, published by ODOT, to Linn County is \$623,206 (1% less than 2017-2019) and the allocation to the Albany urbanized area is \$204,539 (6% more than 2017-2019).

Volmert indicated that all of the programs that have submitted applications are eligible to receive Section 5310 funds, all have submitted reports in a generally timely manner in the past biennia and all requests are consistent with the priorities identified in the Linn County Coordinated Plan and other transit plans.

Presentations by agencies regarding their 2019-2021 Section 5310 applications

Senior Citizens of Sweet Home (Ken Bronson) requests \$305,082 to acquire a large (35 + 2 wheelchair positions) vehicle and a medium (24 + 2 wheelchair positions) vehicle; \$79,156 for preventive maintenance for 16 vehicles; and \$153,366 for purchase service (operations) to support the Linn Shuttle’s “Express Service” between Lebanon and LBCC/Albany.

Lebanon (Kindra Oliver) requests \$20,997 for preventive maintenance for 7 vehicles.

Chamberlin House (Judie Foster-Lupkin) requests \$10,768 for preventive maintenance for 11 vehicles.

Sunshine Industries (Brittany Donnell) requests \$15,254 for preventive maintenance for 16 vehicles.

Oregon Mennonite Residential Services (Mark Volmert in lieu of Karen Litwiller) requests \$8,076 for preventive maintenance for 3 vehicles.

Linn County (Mark Volmert) Requests \$60,000 for Mobility Management services to assist local agencies improve coordination and efficiency and increase Linn County residents’ access to services.

City of Albany (Barry Hoffman and Ted Frazier) Requests \$59,000 of urban area funds for purchase service (operations) to support the Linn-Benton Loop service; and \$145,514 of urban area funds for purchase service (operations) to support Albany Call-A-Ride.

Volmert noted the TAC on January 29 recommended the allocation of \$24,000 of 2019-2020 STF funds to the Linn-Benton Loop. Benton County has allocated \$23,500 of 2019-2020 STF funds to the Linn-Benton Loop. The Section 5310 request of \$59,000, if approved, would mean Linn County’s annual allocation to the Linn-Benton Loop would be nearly \$30,000 more than Benton County’s annual allocation. He noted that AAMPO and CAMPO currently provide equal financial support of the Linn-Benton Loop; and LBCC and OSU also currently provide equal financial support of the Linn-Benton Loop.

Public hearing regarding 2019-2021 Section 5310 allocations

Following the presentation about the programs, Tim McQueary opened the public hearing. No member of the public requested to speak and McQueary closed the public hearing.

Discussion and recommendations by the Review Committee regarding Section 5310 funds

Cris Kostol asked about preventive maintenance funds for Volunteer Caregivers. Volmert indicated although Volunteer Caregivers is eligible the requirements that would be placed on Volunteer Caregivers for a relatively small sum of federal Section 5310 funds would be substantial; and the cost of meeting the requirements would be greater than the preventive maintenance funds allocated to Volunteer Caregivers. Mark Bernard agreed.

Volmert reported that Linn County has received Mobility Management funds for several biennial. The funds were very important to support the multiple transportation planning efforts of Linn County and local cities. The planning efforts have essentially now been completed and we will now move to the development and implementation of the transportation services that were identified and prioritized in the planning efforts. The staffing of this effort is more appropriately aligned with the STIF program rather than the Section 5310 Mobility Management program. A small part of the current Mobility Management effort, not specifically aligned to the planning, development and implementation of STIF projects can be picked up by Linn County's General Fund contributions.

Volmert noted that if the Mobility Management funding request is added to the other requests the total amount requested is \$652,699, \$29,493 more than the total Linn County allocation (not including the small urban area allocation) of \$623,206. If the Mobility Management request is not funded \$30,507 would be available to fund other programs. He noted that the other programs have been, essentially, flat funded for four years (longer for some programs). Volmert indicated preventive maintenance is a particularly high priority for the programs and, with limited Section 5310 funds available in the past two biennia, local programs have not requested as much money as they need. He also noted the importance of preventive maintenance funds in the event STF allocations need to be reduced.

TAC members discussed increases in preventive maintenance funds to the five programs based on the number of vehicles, ridership, mileage driven and the condition of the fleets.

Motion by Ken Bronson and seconded by Cindi Robeck to recommend that the Board of Commissioners allocate:

\$305,082 to the Senior Citizens of Sweet Home for the acquisition of two vehicles

\$153,366 to the Senior Citizens of Sweet Home for purchase service (operations) to support the “Lebanon Express” between Lebanon-LBCC/Albany

\$96,663 to the Senior Citizens of Sweet Home for preventive maintenance

\$25,997 to the City of Lebanon for preventive maintenance

\$12,768 to Chamberlin House for preventive maintenance

\$20,254 to Sunshine Industries for preventive maintenance

\$9,076 to Oregon Mennonite Residential Services for preventive maintenance

The motion passed unanimously.

TAC members then discussed the urban area funds. Members discussed the long-standing funding equity issue regarding the Linn-Benton Loop. It was noted that Benton County has increased its annual support, in the past few years, from \$4,000 to \$23,500; and has committed, in concept, to a \$300,000 allocation in 2019-2020 STIF formula funds and a \$300,000 allocation in 2020-2021 STIF formula funds (equal to the allocations from Linn County). In recognition of this and in the spirit of good partnership Barry Hoffman suggested that the Linn County TAC fund the Linn-Benton Loop at the amount requested for 2019-2021 (\$59,000) and send a letter to the Linn-Benton Loop Governing Board and TAC requesting equal funding from Benton County and Linn County STF and Section 5310 funds in 2021-2023.

Motion by Kindra Oliver and seconded by Ken Bronson to recommend that the Board of Commissioners allocate:

\$145,539 to Albany Call for purchase service (operations) to support the Albany Call-A-Ride

\$59,000 to the Linn-Benton Loop for purchase service (operations) to support the Linn-Benton Loop Express;

and direct that a letter be sent to the Linn-Benton Loop Governing Board and TAC requesting equal funding from Benton County and Linn County STF and Section 5310 funds in 2021-2023.

The motion passed unanimously.

### HB 2017/STIF Sub-Allocation Method

Volmert provided a summary of the sub-allocation method discussions that have been held with local public transportation service providers during the past several months; as well as the discussions at prior TAC meetings. Volmert also discussed the written draft sub-allocation method that had been forwarded to TAC members and public transportation service providers.

Mark Bernard indicated “this is a local process” and Oregon Administrative Rules provide Linn County with flexibility to develop its own process using the “best available census data”. Volmert noted the well-discussed observation by US Census Bureau staff and a long list of other agencies that the accuracy of the American Community Survey’s data for small cities and rural areas is simply very limited. In cities/communities with a population of less than 5,000 the ACS’ margin of error rate is reported at 50% for families. Additionally, although ACS provides data on “individuals” and “families” it does not provide data on “households” which is the word used in HB 2017. ODOT and others have attempted to translate ACS data about “individuals” and “families” into “households”. Volmert indicated, in his opinion, this results in data for small cities and rural areas that is simply not very accurate. “Best available data” is even more limited when efforts are made to look at census blocks to review low income household data related to fixed routes of buses.

TAC members discussed the draft Sub-Allocation Method. It was noted that the method includes far more comprehensive factors than the STIF OAR requirement “as a starting point for funding prioritization the amount of employment tax revenue generated within the geographic territory of each public transportation service provider” and that the OAR requirement indicates it is only a “starting point” and “not an entitlement to public transportation service providers and decision criteria may effect the prioritization of projects”. The method that has been discussed by TAC members during the past few months, in consultation with public transportation service providers, generally reflects the factors and approach used for more than a decade by the TAC and the Board of Commissioners for STF and Section 5310 allocations.

Motion by Cris Kostol and seconded by Kindra Oliver to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the (attached) Sub-Allocation Method. The motion passed unanimously.

Mark Bernard indicated Linn County needs to define “community”. TAC members discussed “community”.

Motion by Cris Kostol and seconded by Cindi Robeck to recommend that the Board of Commissioners that Linn County defines “community”, for the purposes of STIF, as “Linn County”. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and recommendations regarding STF funding priorities

Volmert indicated, as he did at the January 29 TAC meeting, that ODOT has requested transit districts/counties/tribes to make STF allocation recommendations based on the allocation targets published in October. ODOT also requests that transit districts/counties/tribes identify program funding priorities (in a general manner) to assist them in the event some or all of the \$10 million in General Funds are not approved. This will also provide a “heads up” to local programs that currently receive STF funds. This is a general prioritization and is certainly not binding. In the event STF funding is reduced, the amount of the reduction could impact the future funding prioritization.

TAC members indicated that non-profit agencies have less funding options than public transportation service providers and STF funds are, therefore, particularly important to the non-profit agencies.

TAC members ranked the current 11 recipients of STF funds.

Motion by Cris Kostol and seconded by Ted Frazier to report to the Board of Commissioners the following non-binding prioritization:

“A” (Do not reduce funding)

Volunteer Caregivers  
COG Senior/Disabilities Services  
Sunshine Industries  
Chamberlin House  
OMRS

“B” (Reduce some funding)

City of Lebanon  
Linn Shuttle

Sweet Home Dial-A-Bus  
Benton County Dial-A-Bus  
Linn-Benton Loop (Funding equal to Benton County)

“C” (Do not fund, depending on the amount of STF reduction)

Albany Call-A-Ride

The motion passed unanimously.

Other Matters

There were no other matters discussed.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:38.

Submitted by:

Mark Volmert