

Meeting Minutes: HB2017 Transit Advisory Committee – August 23, 2024

Attendees

David Bouchard — TriMet

Tom Mills — TriMet

April Bertelsen — City of Portland

Michael Morrow — Committee co-chair

Washington County Commissioner Roy Rogers

Eileen Collins-Mastel — TriMet

Mike Strauch — SCTD

Justin Trubiani — TriMet

Sushmita Poddar

Dyami Valentine — Washington County

Brandon Brezic — Central City Concern

Jennifer Cooper — ODOT Region 1

Jan Campbell — Committee on Accessible Transportation

Heidi Muller — City of Canby

Margi Bradway

Sara Wright

Aron Carleson

Ally Holmqvist — Metro

Dan Bower — Portland Streetcar

Phil Selinger

Kittie Kong — TriMet

Eve Nilenders — Multnomah County

Andrew Aebi

Julie Wilcke Pilmer

Michael Dohn — TriMet

Jeff Rogers — TriMet

JP Gonzalez — TriMet

Kelsey Lewis — SMART

Karen Buehrig — Clackamas County

John Whitman — Ride Connection

Claudia Robertson

Reza Farhoodi — Washington County

Erick Moe

Nancy Young-Oliver

Vikki Payne — Multnomah County, District 3

Jamie Surface — TriMet

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by co-chair Michael Morrow.

Public Comment

There were no public comments for this meeting.

Agenda Review and Updates

Tom Mills provided a review of the meeting agenda, outlining the following key items:

- Financial Outlook Presentation by Michael Dohn.
- Discussion on the proposed STIF plan budget.
- Updates on the Forward Together initiative.
- Presentation of TriMet's new citizen committee stipends program.

TriMet Financial Outlook – Presentation by Michael Dohn

Michael Dohn, Director of Budget and Forecasting at TriMet, presented an overview of TriMet's long-term financial outlook, focusing on:

- Key Cost Drivers: Inflation in personnel, materials, services, state of good repair (vehicle replacements, infrastructure), service growth, system expansion, and

safety/security improvements.

- Revenue Concerns: Decline in fare revenue, slower-than-expected growth in payroll tax revenues, and the projected federal stimulus funds running out by 2031, leading to a potential "fiscal cliff."
- Projected Deficit: A gap between rising expenditures and revenues, leading to a fiscal cliff in 2031 unless new funding sources or cost savings are identified.
- Solutions Underway: TriMet has formed internal groups to address potential revenue and cost efficiencies. Solutions being explored include new tax and fare increases, operational efficiencies, and restructured expenditures.

Questions and Discussions

- Washington County Commissioner Roy Rogers expressed concern about the financial cliff, stressing the need for course corrections and seeking feedback on how citizen groups could contribute ideas.
- Nancy Young-Oliver, Executive Director of Finance at TriMet, reassured attendees that TriMet is taking proactive steps to manage costs and find new funding opportunities, noting that TriMet is better off than many other transit agencies.
- Phil Selinger asked about productivity improvements and the use of best-case/worst-case scenario planning.
- Nancy Young-Oliver explained that TriMet is actively seeking efficiency improvements and exploring various funding streams to mitigate the projected deficit.

Proposed FY 26-27 STIF Plan Budget – Tom Mills

Tom Mills reviewed the FY 26-27 STIF Plan Budget, highlighting:

- Projected Revenue: \$135.3 million over the biennium, with a 20% over-projection to allow for spending flexibility.
- Expenditure Plan:
 - Fixed-route service expansion and preservation: \$144 million.
 - Subsidized fare programs: \$22 million.
 - Student fare programs: \$1.98 million.
 - Lift vehicles and accessible transportation services: \$3.1 million.
 - Regional coordination and human services: \$2 million annually.

Questions and Comments

- April Bertelsen requested more information on how the subsidized fare numbers were calculated and raised concerns about low-income fare growth.
- Andrew Aebi raised the idea of using surplus funds for capital projects like the Columbia Bus Base to reduce future debt obligations.

Forward Together Update – Tom Mills

Tom Mills provided an update on the Forward Together initiative:

- Service Expansions: 63.38 miles of new service, primarily in Washington and

Multnomah counties.

- Service Hours Increases:

- Clackamas County: 30% increase.

- Washington County: 53% increase.

- Multnomah County: 25% increase.

- High Schools Gaining New Service: Liberty, Mountainside, Lake Ridge, and Reynolds High Schools.

- Lift Service Changes: Some areas would lose Lift coverage, but alternative shuttle services are being explored.

Questions and Comments

- Phil Selinger asked how equity considerations were being addressed in the Forward Together service changes. Tom Mills confirmed that equity was a key factor in reallocating resources, especially to low-wage job centers and underserved areas.

- Andrew Aebi suggested comparing the payroll tax revenue by county to service levels, noting historic under-service in Clackamas County. Tom Mills emphasized the importance of viewing the system as a network rather than focusing solely on local service levels.

Committee Stipends Program – Tom Mills and Kittie Kong

Tom Mills and Kittie Kong introduced TriMet's new stipend program to support participation in advisory committees. Key details:

- Eligibility: Up to \$50 per meeting for participants not already compensated by their employers or government employees.

- Process: Members will be asked to opt in or out. Payments will be made quarterly.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Michael Morrow.

The next meeting will be scheduled for September 2023.