

NWOTA

September 10, 2021

Introductions

Attending: Arla Miller, Jeff Hazen, Caroline Crisp, Shannon Wakeman, Aaron Antrim, John Dreezen, Brad Dillingham, Juliet Eldred

Consent Calendar: John moves to approve, Brad seconds, motion passes.

NWOTA Standing Items:

Marketing: 'Car Free' ride campaign going through December. Page likes continue upward trend. Juliet would like to know if we need to change messaging due to COVID as its typically targeted at visitors. Jeff says we have capacity on running buses to accept more riders. However, we don't want a full-fledged campaign as the coast is burnt out on tourists. Talking about essential workers would be good. Shannon says in Tillamook a campaign with more local appeal would be good, some riders feel like not enough is being done to support transit users. John says local dial a ride is going very well; also one driver away from being in trouble with keeping routes full. Brad feels similarly and brings up that OSU starts in two weeks which could increase ridership. Conversation decided that topics such as Germ Fogger, essential workers (driver profiles), and safety of public of transit. Jeff Hazen volunteered an employee to create a video about safety. Shannon has worked on driver profiles, using testimonials and photos. Sarah Lu offered to help get job openings on the 'News' section of the NW Connector website so Juliet can find and promote.

Trillium Update – Updates on OTP as a tool: Trillium does not have an estimate on costs going down in the next 6-9 months. They are working in at least one other state for larger scale OTP projects. Client in CA also using OTP with hosting and Trillium is looking at bulk prices with this group. A company in Eurpouse that they were hoping to work with for a discounted rate has gone bankrupt, the company that acquired their assets may ramp the program back up but Trillium has not yet reached out. Trillium is still working on making this most affordable. They meet with ODOT monthly and would like to expand OTP to the rest of the state with ODOTs help. ITS4US is a five-year, three-state, plan book and pay option through trip planner, and that group could benefit from looking at we're doing with OTP. At this time, we can expect that the rate will be lower, but we don't know how much lower. We should have a better idea by January 2022.

Sarah Lu asked about general updates from Trillium. Chris says moving forward we're looking at demand response into the integrated map so folks can see where the services operate. Visual updates will be coming soon.

John asks about grant funding to continue to pay for OTP. Jeff thinks more Federal funding is coming and might be an opportunity. Arla believes that ARPA funds at ODOT will be discretionary and related to COVID, grants will be available and awarded by July 2022. FTA funding is only available if ARPA funds could not be used. Jeff ponders how we can use these funds to address our biggest problem: driver shortages, maybe hiring bonuses? Might use funds for demand response related to mobility management. SEDT is exploring expanding demand response. Columbia's demand response is going well, with 65 trips today, significantly higher than every before and higher than Tillamook. Previously 45

would have been a good day in Columbia County and is seeing lots of folks using it to go to work or medical care. Commuter traffic is still slow as Portland remains working from home. Brad/Benton is seeing steadily increasing ridership, but not to where it was. Demand response was overhauled at the beginning of 2021.

For micro-transit, drivers may be easier to find as they don't need CDLs. Cottage Grove mobility on demand may be a program we could learn from, although there is concern about moving too far towards a taxi service. No-shows are also a major concern.

Calculating Average Passenger Miles: SETD to have updated assumptions by November.

Service Cut Coordination: without Doug and specific examples we were unable to complete conversation. We'll keep this agenda item for next month.

Sanitation Grant Update: Distilled water is a problem. John ordered a 55 gallon drum of solution and now waiting on water. Chem World provided the distilled water.

Brad connect with Olivia at Germ Fogger; equipment was shipped but refused delivery, which will be resent.

Arla/ODOT has extended the sanitation grant deadline to December 31, 2021 to ensure equipment and solution can be acquired.

Other Business and Member Updates:

John/Columbia Co: Settling into using EcoLane and it is going well despite some glitches, some related to driver training and embracing new technology. Ridership is slowly picking up but is probably still at 50% of 'normal'. Catalytic converter theft is becoming an issue and they're looking at new security methods.

Brad/Benton Co: Looking for drivers; OSU starts in two weeks doubling the population of Corvallis, working on signage to show students what stops will take them to campus. Starting in October they want to create an "Outreach October" campaign for students and others to be aware of transit opportunities; ideally this will be an annual campaign. Surveys will be a major component as well. Working with Amtrak, nearly have interline agreement complete. Request for information on a new dispatch software is out, and looking for vendors for cameras.

Shannon/Tillamook Co: We have four drivers starting training and one more interviewing. We have a RFP out for a coordinated human services plan. Oct 1 TCTB will implement new fare policy on fixed routes. In November they hope to launch 'token transit' using app and will host a marketing campaign for that.

Jeff/Clatsop Co: One new driver coming on, who used to be a trainer with SETD. Ops assistant left and the new position will be Transportation Support Specialist. Discussed mandatory vaccinations with their board but did not ask for decisions. SETD surveyed employees about vaccination status and there were some folks totally against taking vaccinations.

Refurbished buses are on the road and going well, nice buses.

Prison driver training idea moving forward with an October meeting of several transit agencies, DMV, and others. Senator Johnson is supportive of the idea. Also meeting with sheriff and parole directors to illuminate individuals that would be a good fit. National conversation is taking place next week, co-

hosted by Julia Castillo from Iowa. There are two types of simulators for training; costing between \$160-310k.

Arla/ODOT: We're seeing an uptick in driver deaths due to COVID across the state. Vehicle purchases are being stymied by factories shutting down, increased prices, and delivery issues. We cannot use previous prices for vehicle purchase estimates. Agreements can be amended for timelines, as these issues are now common. Offered a thank-you to the hard work agencies are doing.